

Richland County Government



J. Milton Pope
County Administrator

April 24, 2009

Office of Congressman Joe Wilson
Attn: Melissa Chandler
212 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Wilson,

On behalf of Richland County Council, **I am pleased to submit and recommend the Hardscrabble Road Improvement Project** for your consideration during Congress' upcoming reauthorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU). The estimated cost of the Hardscrabble project is \$79.2 million. Of this amount, **Richland County is requesting \$63.36 million, or 80% of the project cost.**

The Northeast area of Richland County is one of the fastest growing areas in the state. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, Northeast Richland added over 23,500 new residents (a 70.8% increase) and over 9,100 new households (an 83.6% increase) between 1990 and 2000. According to Richland County building permit data, this growth has continued into the current decade. Between 2000 and 2008, a total of 12,604 new residential addresses were added in the 29229, 29223, and 29016 zip codes, which surround Hardscrabble corridor. This accounted for over 67% of *all* new residences built in Richland County, and nearly *doubled* the number of households in Northeast Richland from the 2000 Census.

The growth in Northeast Richland has placed a tremendous burden on transportation infrastructure. With as many as 27,600 vehicles per day, the Level of Service on Hardscrabble Road ranges from D to F. In recent years, there have been over 200 accidents annually, some of which have been fatal.

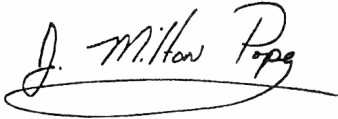
In May 2008, the Richland County Transportation Study Commission completed a comprehensive, multi-modal study of the overall transportation needs in Richland County. After 18 months of careful study and a total of nine public input meetings, **the Hardscrabble Road project emerged as the highest ranked road improvement in Richland County.** Prior to the release of the Commission's final recommendations, over 200 residents of Northeast Richland County attended a community meeting on April 14, 2008 at Ridge View High School to voice their support for the widening of Hardscrabble Road. **Currently, both segments of Hardscrabble Road are listed on the top-ten list of the Central Midlands Council of Government's Long-Range Transportation Plan.** In March 2009, the CMCOG approved **\$4 million** in federal guideshare funds for preliminary work on the Hardscrabble Road project.

The Hardscrabble Road project has widespread public support in the Northeast Community. In addition to the hundreds of residents who participated in the Richland County Transportation Study, area businesses have collected over 10,000 signatures in support of widening Hardscrabble to five lanes. **If selected for inclusion in the upcoming transportation bill, Richland County is committed to using all resources available to ensure that residents have an opportunity to provide comments on the project, including community meetings, focus groups, task forces, and regular communication with area residents and businesses through mail and electronic means.**

The Hardscrabble Road project represents a significant opportunity to bring jobs, investment, and infrastructure improvements to Northeast Richland County in order to maximize safety and improve the quality of life of Richland County residents. **I respectfully ask you to join Richland County in supporting this much needed project.**

As always, we appreciate all that you do on behalf of the residents of Richland County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "J. Milton Pope". The signature is written in dark ink and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

J. Milton Pope
Richland County Administrator

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